

## How long does the local anaesthetic take to wear off?

The effects of this anaesthetic will usually wear off within one to four hours, but it can take longer. As the spinal anaesthetic wears off you may experience some tingling in the skin, and you may become aware of some pain from the operation site. If this is the case you can ask the recovery staff for your pain relief.

The recovery staff will ensure that you can safely stand and walk comfortably before you are allowed home. You must also be able to pass urine before you leave hospital.

## Are there risks associated with a spinal anaesthetic?

Everything a doctor does is a balance between improving your health and minimising the side effects or risks that all treatments have.

Very common or common (affecting up to approximately 1:10 or 1:100 people) side effects include:

- Low blood pressure
- Itching
- Difficulty passing urine
- Pain during injection
- Headache (1:200 people). This is typically worse when sitting up/standing, and relieved by lying down.

Rare or very rare (affecting up to approximately 1:10,000 or 100,000 people) risks include:

- Permanent Nerve Damage (occurs between 1:23,500 and 1:50,500)
- Death or paraplegia (occurs between 1:54,000 and 1:141,500)

## Follow up process

If you are sent home on the day of your spinal anaesthetic, you should expect a follow up phone call 24-72 hours later, to check you are well, and to ask about your experience. If you have a headache after your spinal anaesthetic, drink plenty of water and take simple painkillers. If your headache does not get better, please contact the on-call anaesthetist via the switchboard on 01342 414000. In the unlikely event that you experience "red flag symptoms" such as:

- Persistent or worsening tingling, heaviness or weakness in your legs
- Increasing back or leg pain, sometimes with fever and neck stiffness
- Loss of sensation to the bottom/genitalia
- Unable to pass urine or incontinence

**Please seek medical attention immediately.** If you are still in hospital, inform the ward nurse urgently so that they can contact a doctor. If you have been discharged and wish for general advice you can contact the on-call anaesthetist via switchboard on 01342 414000. If for any reason you are unable to contact us at QVH, **do not delay seeking medical assistance** - call 999 or proceed to your nearest Accident and Emergency department as appropriate.

You can find more information from the Royal College of Anaesthetists website [www.rcoa.ac.uk](http://www.rcoa.ac.uk), via the patient information section.

## References:

National Audit of Major Complications of Central Neuraxial Block in the United Kingdom. 3rd National Audit Project of the Royal College of Anaesthetists. T Cook et al RCoA, London 2009

Your Spinal Anaesthetic, Royal College of Anaesthetists Patient Information leaflets, 5th Edition, Feb 2020

## Information following a spinal anaesthetic at Queen Victoria Hospital

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